

Children's homes inspection - Full

Inspection date	30/06/2015
Unique reference number	SC036026
Type of inspection	Full
Provision subtype	Children's home
Registered person	Sheffield City Council
Registered person address	Sheffield City Council, Town Hall, Pinstone Street, SHEFFIELD, S1 2HH

Responsible individual	Ms Dorne Collinson
Registered manager	Mr Patrick McGeeney
Inspector	Ms Stella Henderson

Inspection date	30/06/2015
Previous inspection judgement	Declined in effectiveness
Enforcement action since last inspection	None
This inspection	
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home	Requires improvement
The children's home is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.	
how well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
the impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement

SC036026

Summary of findings

The children's home provision requires improvement because:

- Staff do not take sufficient action to keep in touch and locate young people when they are away from the home without permission
- Young people do not consistently receive return home interviews when they have been missing from home. The home does not meet its Statement of Purpose in respect of this commitment to young people
- There is a lack of structured routine and learning opportunities for young people who are not in full time education
- Matters of concern are not escalated to a senior level in a timely manner when young people are not receiving the services they are entitled to
- Young peoples' records of their time and progress at the home are not always completed and available

The children's home strengths

- Young people who are new to the home are enabled to settle in and begin to make improvement quickly
- There is effective partnership working with parents and a stable, well established staff team
- Joint working with other agencies is improving and beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of care for young people
- Senior management recognise the areas that need to change in order to improve experiences and outcomes for young people

Requirement	Due date
8 The education standard (1)The education standard is that children make measureable progress towards achieving their educational potential and are helped to do so. (2) In particular the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure (a) that staff- (viii) help a child who is excluded from school, or who is of compulsory school age but not attending school, to access educational and training support throughout the period of exclusion or non-attendance and to return to school as soon as possible	30/07/2015
12 The protection of children standard (1)The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure- (a) that staff- (vi) take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. This is with specific reference to ensuring that risk assessments protect children and others in the community.	30/07/2015
13 The leadership and management standard (1)The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that- (a) helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and (b) promotes their welfare. (2) In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to- (h) use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. This is with specific reference to improving monitoring systems to identify emerging patterns of concern.	30/07/2015
The registered person must compile in relation to the children's home a statement ("the statement of purpose") which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1 and ensure that the home is at all times conducted in a manner which is consistent with its	30/07/2015

statement of purpose. (Regulation 16 (1)(5))	
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the service should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- Take the initiative in identifying others who must play a part for their children and engage with those relevant people pro-actively, advocating for the children in their care (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 12, paragraph 2.7)
- The Registered Person must specify the procedures to be followed and the roles and responsibilities of staff when a child is missing from care or away from the home without permission (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45, paragraph 9.28)
- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 45, paragraph 9.30)
- All children's case records must be kept up to date and stored securely whilst they remain in the home. (The Guide to the Quality Standards, page 62, paragraph 14.3)

Full report

Information about this children's home

This is a local authority children's home which provides care and accommodation for up to five young people from 11 to 16 years who experience emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
24/02/2015	Interim	Declined in effectiveness
09/05/2014	Full	Good
16/12/2013	Interim	Inadequate Progress
17/07/2013	Full	Good

Inspection Judgements

	Judgement grade
The overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home are	Requires improvement
Young people have mixed experiences and make variable progress. Some spend a considerable time away from the home without permission. These individuals are not fully engaged in education. Their school week lacks structure and routine. There has been a slow response to implementing alternative arrangements. This has not been escalated at an early enough point to senior management for action. Other young people become fully engaged with the help offered by staff and are beginning to thrive. They are responding well to the routines and boundaries put in place to support them. School attendance and performance has improved and they take advantage of activities on offer. This includes youth clubs, football camps, boxing and days out with staff. There is an emphasis on keeping busy and engaging in physical activities. This, along with a sensible and varied diet, assists young people to keep fit and healthy. This is supplemented by the usual routine health checks and specialist intervention, where considered necessary, to meet young people's physical and emotional health needs. Young people maintain relationships with their friends in the community, visiting each other's homes and going out with their families. One parent noted a difference in their child over a relatively short period of time, 'He is beginning to make some good progress.' Parents feel included in the care of and decision-making related to their children. In this respect the home fulfils the objective in its Statement of Purpose to, 'work in partnership with family and friends and encourage full participation in the well-being of their children.' Young people who are new to the home settle in quickly. Staff undertake a lot of background research and reading on their background and histories. Young people are able to visit the home before they move in. This helps them to familiarise themselves with how the home works, expectations about behaviour and to meet the person who will be their key worker. Young people are involved in practical tasks around the home, but are also guided by staff in thinking about the decisions and choices they have to make in life. This helps young people to prepare for the realities of independence and adulthood.	

Young people live in a pleasant residential setting with good access to transport and amenities. Maintenance of the home is good which helps to provide a homely and comfortable environment for young people to live in.

	Judgement grade
How well children and young people are helped and protected	Requires improvement
Some young people are allowed to spend a considerable amount of time away from the home without permission. This is often at times when they should be engaged in education. The response of staff to unauthorised absence is inconsistent and guidance is unclear about what action should be taken. This has resulted in staff making limited contact with young people to make basic enquiries about their safety and whereabouts. This may convey to young people that staff are not interested in their welfare. During these periods of time away from the home, young people are more at risk to involvement in criminal activity. Their own behaviours may pose a threat to others and they may become victims of crime themselves. Assessments and action plans do not always take account of how these risk factors are linked; each is seen in isolation. This increases young people's vulnerability and does not protect the wider public. When young people are officially deemed as missing from the home, action taken by staff is more consistent and timely. Young people return, or are returned safely to the home, but they do not always receive a welfare check by the police. For example, one young person has been missing from the home on twelve occasions, but has only received three welfare visits. When the police cannot undertake these visits, there is no contingency plan for someone else to see that young people are safe. Concerns about the lack of visits has not been escalated with the appropriate police authority. This is not in keeping with the agreed police protocol or the home's Statement of Purpose which states, 'when a young person has been reported missing, on their return the police will visit the child to do a safe and well check.' The behaviour of young people new to the home is positively influenced by the stability and consistency offered by the staff team. Background research and planning means staff get to know young people very well. As a result they quickly	

become attuned to patterns of behaviour that need addressing. Subtle and manipulative bullying between young people has been a problem for this home in the past. Poor matching contributed to these difficulties. At the last inspection a requirement was raised to ensure that home only admitted young people whose best interests it was to be there, and that others would not be impacted by that admission.

Lessons have been learnt from that experience. There is now a clearer focus and procedure on matching the needs of young people already at the home with those needing placements. The manager is consulting more widely with other professionals to contribute to the matching process. This approach is endorsed by senior management and the requirement is therefore judged to be met.

	Judgement grade
The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers	Requires improvement
The Registered Manager possesses a Level 4 qualification in management. He has extensive management and child care experience and has managed the home for over five years. He ensures he maintains his continual professional development through training, research and professional supervision. The manager's monitoring of the home is not sufficiently robust to identify patterns of concern. This includes the inconsistent staff response to unauthorised absences, lack of routine welfare visits from the police and drift in educational provision. Where concerns are identified, such as the lack of suitable education provision, the challenge to other services or escalation to senior management or the Responsible Individual is lacking. This means young people do not get the services they need in a timely manner. The home has been through a very difficult period of dealing with young people's extremely challenging behaviour and the absence of the manager for a short period. Staff maintained their commitment to young people during this time, clearly demonstrating that they will not give up on them. They continue to 'go the extra mile'. For example, each week they continue to visit a young person who has been admitted to a secure provision. Accurate record-keeping has been a casualty of the need to keep on top of challenging behaviour and meet young people's complex needs. The records of some young people are not necessarily up to date or conveniently to hand. This	

has no direct impact on young people but makes it difficult to monitor the delivery and success of care planning arrangements.

The home is generally working within its Statement of Purpose although in parts this document does not fully reflect the recent change in regulations. These omissions do not influence the quality of care experienced by young people, but means the home cannot be held fully to account.

One of the main strengths of the home is the longevity, stability and experience of the staff team. They know each other very well, but are not afraid to challenge each other's practice. The manager is described as very accessible and supportive and someone who consults with them and listens to their ideas.

This is a home that is learning from incidents that have not gone well with staff, manager and senior management actively reviewing incidents. This enables everyone to have a shared vision of what needs to be changed and how to achieve this for the benefit of young people.

What the inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspection of children's homes: framework for inspection*.

An **outstanding** children's home provides highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help and protection and care. Their progress exceeds expectations and is sustained over time.

A **good** children's home provides effective services that help, protect and care for children and young people and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

In a children's home that **requires improvement**, there are no widespread or serious failures that create or leave children being harmed or at risk of harm. The welfare of looked after children is safeguarded and promoted. Minimum requirements are in place, however, the children's home is not yet delivering good protection, help and care for children and young people.

A children's home that is **inadequate** is providing services where there are widespread or serious failures that create or leave children and young people being harmed or at risk of harm or result in children looked after not having their welfare safeguarded and promoted.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people living in the children's home. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the difference adults make to the lives of children and young people. They read case files, watched how professional staff work with children, young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care given to children and young people. Wherever possible, they talked to children, young people and their families. In addition the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people who it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the *Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards*.

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